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Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Eighth periodic report submitted by the Democratic Republic of the Congo under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2017*

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Abbreviations and acronyms

ART	Article
ARV	Antiretrovirals
BCC	Banque centrale du Congo
CAP	Prosecution support cell
CENI	Independent National Electoral Commission
CGF	Congolese franc
CIDH	Interministerial Committee on Human Rights
CNDH	National Human Rights Commission
CNSA	National Council for Monitoring the Agreement and the Electoral Process
CPRK	Kinshasa Prison and Rehabilitation Centre (Central Makala Prison)
CSAC	Higher Audiovisual and Communications Council
CSM	High Judicial Council
DICOREPHA	Department for the Coordination of Rehabilitation Activities for Persons with Disabilities
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSCRP2	Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2
FARDC	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
FNPSS	National Fund for Advancement and Social Services
FONAFEN	National Fund for the Advancement of Women and the Protection of Children
GDP	Gross domestic product
INS	National Institute of Statistics
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OHADA	Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa
PAI-STATFIN	Institutional Support Project on Statistics and Public Finances
PAN	National Action Plan
PNC	Congolese National Police
PNEFEB2	National Environment, Forests, Water and Biodiversity Programme 2
PNMLS	National Multisectoral Programme to Combat AIDS

PTF	Financial and technical partner
PVV	Persons living with HIV
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SNVBG	National Strategy to Combat Sexual and Gender-based Violence
TGI	Regional court
TPE	Family court
TRICOM	Commercial court
TT	Labour court
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNJHRO	United Nations Joint Human Rights Office
UN-Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UPR	Universal periodic review
VS	Sexual violence
WHO	World Health Organization

Part I

Articles 1 and 2: Definition of discrimination, legal equality between men and women, prohibition and sanctioning of all discrimination, repeal of discriminatory legal provisions

1. Since the submission by the Democratic Republic of the Congo of its combined sixth and seventh periodic report in 2013, Congolese legislation concerning equality between men and women in the exercise and enjoyment of their rights has developed significantly, in line with the Committee's recommendation in paragraph 14 of its concluding observations of 2013 (CEDAW/C/COD/CO/6-7) concerning the finalization of the Family Code and the law on gender equality.

2. The following laws have been adopted:

(a) Act No. 15/013 of 1 August 2015, on means of giving effect to women's rights and gender parity, was adopted to implement article 14 of the Constitution. It strengthens the country's commitment to building a fairer society in which the behaviours, aspirations and different needs of men and women are taken into account. It provides for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and the protection and promotion of women's rights; the comprehensive advancement of women and their full participation in the nation's development; protection from violence against women in public and private life; equitable representation in national, provincial and local institutions; and gender parity. Those provisions apply to the political, administrative, economic, social, cultural, judicial and security fields (see articles 1 and 2 of the Act).

(b) Act. No. 16/008 of 15 July 2016, amending and supplementing Act No. 87-010 of 1 August 1987 on the Family Code, by which all discriminatory provisions of the 1987 Family Code were repealed, including all those concerning marriage and family relations.

(c) It is also worth mentioning the following:

Article 3 (5) of Act No. 08/005 of 10 June 2008, on the public financing of political parties, under which political parties are required to consider gender parity when establishing electoral lists.

Act No. 13/013 of 1 June 2013, on the staff rules for the national police, which does not allow for any form of gender-based discrimination during recruitment or at any stage of employment.

Act No. 16/013 of 15 July 2016, on the staff rules for career civil servants, which superseded the rules of 17 July 1981. Article 8 (8) of the 1981 rules provided that a married woman could not be recruited without her husband's consent.

Act No. 16/010 of 15 July 2016, amending and supplementing Act No. 015-2002 of 16 October 2002 on the Labour Code, which allows women to work at night (see the third preambular paragraph).

Article 3: Measures to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men

3. The following measures have been taken to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of their rights:

(a) In the revised Family Code, article 448, which formerly provided that a married woman could not undertake any legal act without her husband's consent, has

been amended to read as follows: "Any legal act requiring the performance of an obligation may be undertaken only with the agreement of both spouses".

(b) Article 8 (8) of the former staff rules for career civil servants, which provided that a married woman could not be recruited without her husband's consent, was not included in the new staff rules adopted on 15 July 2016. Article 8 (8) read as follows: "If the person is a married woman, she must have received written consent from her husband to exercise a public function."

(c) Article 1 (7) of the staff rules for magistrates of 10 October 2006 reads: "A person may not be appointed as a magistrate unless the following criteria are met: ... (7) If the person is married, a marriage certificate must be provided." It amends a provision in the 1988 rules that read as follows: "If the person is a married woman, written consent from her husband must be provided."

(d) By Act No. 16/010 of 15 July 2016, amending and supplementing Act No. 015-2002 of 16 October 2002 on the Labour Code, article 125 of the Labour Code was amended to read: "Children and persons with disabilities may not work at night in public or private establishments." Thus, women are no longer prohibited from working at night.

(e) Act No. 15/013 of 1 August 2015, on means of giving effect to women's rights and gender parity, was adopted. Article 27 of the Act provides that "the relevant competent authorities shall promote women's access to, and promotion within, the judiciary, the armed forces, the national police and the security services, in accordance with article 1 of this Act." Article 1 reads: "The present law establishes the means of giving effect to women's rights and gender parity in accordance with article 14 of the Constitution."

4. These rights concern:

- The elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and the protection and promotion of women's rights.
- The comprehensive advancement of women and their full participation in the nation's development.
- Protection from violence against women in public and private life.
- Equitable representation in national, provincial and local institutions.
- Gender parity.

Article 4: Temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women and special measures aimed at protecting maternity

5. (a) With regard to temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women, article 22 of Act No. 15/013 provides as follows: "The State shall use incentives to encourage employers to hire women, in order to correct existing inequalities, and to adopt policies that make it easier to balance family and professional obligations, such as flexible working hours, full-time and part-time work, other working arrangements and social security arrangements."

6. (b) As regards special measures aimed at protecting maternity, article 129 of the revised Labour Code of 2016 provides as follows: "A pregnant woman whose condition presents a risk to her health, as duly certified by a doctor, has the right, on the basis of the medical certificate, to suspend her employment contract in accordance with article 57 of this Act, and that break in performance of her duties shall not be considered grounds for termination of her contract. Under the same circumstances, she may terminate her employment contract without notice without incurring liability to pay compensation for breach of contract."

7. To achieve gender parity in the education sector, 12 years ago the Democratic Republic of the Congo launched a campaign to get all girls into school. This was part of a project to raise awareness of the value of girls' education, which also involves providing bursaries for students, organizing entrepreneurship training for families and establishing credit unions to fund schooling.

Article 5: Measures to modify social stereotypes regarding the roles of men and women; and family education to make it understood that maternity is a social function and to ensure recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children

8. As concerns measures to modify social stereotypes regarding the roles of men and women, article 24 of Act No. 15/013 provides that "the State shall take appropriate measures to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of women and men by educating the general public, through strategies using new information and communications technology, with a view to eliminating all harmful cultural practices and practices based on the idea of the inferiority or superiority of either sex or on stereotyped roles of women and men."

9. With regard to family education to make it understood that maternity is a social function and to ensure recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, article 13 of Act No. 15/013 provides that "men and women are equal partners in health and reproduction. They shall agree on a family planning method that takes into account the health of them both."

10. The vision for the social and cultural spheres set out in the national gender policy is for the country to be free of prejudices and stereotypes. To that end, the action plan for the 2013–2017 national reproductive health programme, drawn up with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), takes gender equality and reproductive rights into account by strengthening institutional and community capacities to reduce maternal mortality, prevent gender-based violence and combat early marriage. A tangible result of this vision is the reproductive health programme that has been put in place to support couples throughout the maternity process.

11. With the support of its financial and technical partners (the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, UNFPA and the United Nations Development Programme), the Democratic Republic of the Congo has conducted the following studies to identify the underlying causes of prejudices and stereotypes, quantify their consequences and take appropriate measures for their prevention and elimination:

- Study on the determinants of gender-based violence in conflict and non-conflict zones, provincial gender profiles, and the communications strategy for changing behaviour to combat sexual and gender-based violence.
- Study on the disparities between idealized hegemonic masculinity and the realities of men's lives.
- Study on masculinity and study on transforming masculinity.
- Study on assistance for victims of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and many other studies conducted in recent years.

12. Strategies have also been put in place to eliminate stereotypes in the education sector. These include an "education for life" course, student committees and strategies for creating gender-sensitive schools.

Article 6: Measures to suppress traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women

13. With regard to measures to suppress trafficking in women, a national committee on combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling has been established within the Ministry of Internal Affairs. A draft anti-human trafficking law has also been drawn up, and the Ministry has organized awareness-raising campaigns and produced an action plan to combat human trafficking.

14. As concerns the exploitation of the prostitution of women, article 25 of Act No. 15/013 provides as follows: "Every woman has the right to respect for her life, physical integrity and security of person. All forms of exploitation, punishment and inhuman or degrading treatment are prohibited."

Part II

Article 7: Measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life

15. With regard to the measures taken to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life, articles 4, 5, 6 and 33 of Act No. 15/013 provide as follows:

> Article 4: "Men and women shall enjoy all political rights on an equal footing. Women shall be represented equitably in all appointed and elected positions in national, provincial and local institutions, including the democracy-supporting institutions, the National Economic and Social Council and public and quasi-public institutions at all levels";
>
> Article 5: "Political parties shall take account of gender parity in drawing up candidate lists in accordance with the conditions stipulated in the Electoral Act";
>
> Article 6: "The State shall adopt specific strategies for ensuring that women and men have equal opportunities to participate in all electoral processes, including election administration and voting. It shall see to it that men are included in all activities concerning gender and community mobilization";
>
> Article 33: "Any political party whose candidate list does not take the gender dimension into account shall not be eligible for public funding."

16. Article 264 of the amended Family Code provides that "The composition of the guardianship council shall take gender representation into account."

17. Act No. 16/013 of 15 July 2016 on the personnel rules governing career civil servants replaces the rules of 17 July 1981, article 8 (8) of which provided that a married woman could not be recruited without her husband's consent. The new rules set the minimum and maximum ages of recruitment (respectively 18 and 35 years) on an equitable basis.

18. At the political level, the National Gender Policy aims to achieve equal representation for women in local, provincial and national institutions.

19. In this connection, advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives on gender mainstreaming are being undertaken in institutions.

Article 8: Measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the opportunity to represent the Government at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations

20. In addition to the information provided in the combined sixth and seventh periodic report, there has been a slight improvement in this regard, as indicated in the table below:

Number of female and male heads of diplomatic missions

	Men	*Women*	*Total*	*Women (%)*
Number of ambassadors	30	6	36	17
Number of chargés d'affaires	24	6	30	20
Number of consuls	2	2	4	50

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2017.

21. As concerns participation in the work of regional and international organizations, women sometimes lead delegations, when they hold the position of minister of the relevant sector. For example, the national delegation that met with the Committee on the Rights of the Child in January 2017 was led by two female ministers (the Minister of Human Rights and the Minister of Gender, Family and Children's Affairs).

Article 9: Equal rights for women and men to acquire, change or retain their nationality and with respect to the nationality of their children.

22. With regard to children, in addition to the information provided in the combined sixth and seventh periodic report (CEDAW/C/COD/6-7) and the replies to the list of issues (CEDAW/C/COD/Q/6-7/Add.1), article 20 of Act No. 04/024 of 12 November 2004 on Congolese nationality specifies that the annulment of a marriage has no effect on the nationality of the children. This provision complements article 7 of the same law, which states that a child with one Congolese parent (mother or father) shall be considered Congolese from birth.

Part III

Article 10: Measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of education

23. In addition to the information provided in the combined sixth and seventh periodic report (CEDAW/C/COD/6-7), articles 2, 4, 7 (8), 9 (1) and 75 of Framework Act No. 14/004 of 11 February 2014 on education provide as follows:

Article 2: "The purpose of this Act is to create the conditions necessary for:

- Access to school education by all and for all;
- The training of elites for harmonious and sustainable development;
- The eradication of illiteracy."

Article 4: "National education aims to provide:

- Permanent and comprehensive formal education for both women and men;

- The skills as well as the human, moral, civic and cultural values needed to create a new democratic, united and prosperous Congolese society that embraces peace and justice."

Article 7 (8): "Education for all: one of the Millennium Development Goals, to ensure that boys and girls have the means to complete primary school so that they will be able to contribute to society."

Article 9 (1): "The national education policy focuses on:

- universal basic education; [...]"

Article 75: "Any person over the age of 18 years who was unable to attend primary school, whether due to the failure of his or her parents or guardian or for any other reason, shall be able to receive that instruction through non-formal education at any time."

24. Article 10 of Act No. 15/013 of 1 August 2015 on means of giving effect to women's rights and gender parity states that "men and women are entitled to equal opportunities and equal access to education and training.

25. Accordingly, the Government shall implement specific programmes to:

- Promote parity between girls and boys in terms of school enrolment;
- Encourage girls' entry into all fields of study;
- Substantially reduce the literacy gap between men and women;
- Provide education to out-of-school children of both sexes through special programmes, apprenticeships and vocational training;
- Provide training and education free of charge to girls and boys living in poverty;
- Ensure that teenage mothers and pregnant teenagers are able to pursue their education."

26. In 2013–2014, the gross enrolment ratio for primary education increased to 112 per cent (120 per cent for boys and 106 per cent for girls), and the gender parity index for the gross enrolment ratio was at 1.90.

27. Government authorities have taken measures to ensure equality between men and women in the field of education, the most important of which focus on:

(i) Removing barriers to access for girls and boys;

(ii) Improving the enrolment and retention rates of women and girls in higher education (in science, mathematics and technology);

(iii) Narrowing the gap between men and women in functional literacy;

(iv) Removing barriers that impede the schooling of pregnant adolescents.

28. Under the education sector strategy (2016–2025), developed by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, school administrators are asked to allow pregnant girls and mothers to continue their studies.

29. In addition to the above-mentioned laws and measures, the Government is working to effectively implement free and compulsory primary education for all, raise awareness about access to school for girls and boys and eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in the field of education. Additionally, adequate sanitation facilities are being built and maintained under the "cleaner schools" programme.

Article 11: Measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment and to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity

30. As concerns measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment, new laws have been adopted:

- Article 21 of Act No. 15/013 of 1 August 2015 on the means of giving effect to women's rights and gender parity provides as follows: "Without prejudice to the legal provisions in force, the prohibition of all discrimination shall apply to any harmful practice in relation inter alia to recruitment, work assignments, working conditions, pay and benefits, promotion, and termination of the employment contract";
- Article 448 of Act No. 16/008 of 15 July 2016 amending and supplementing Act No. 87-010 of 1 August 1987 on the Family Code, mentioned above, has already resolved the issue of discrimination against women in the field of employment;
- Act No. 16/013 of 15 July 2016 on the personnel rules governing career civil servants replaced the previous law of 17 July 1981, which provided that a married woman could not be recruited without her husband's consent;
- Article 125 of Act No. 16/010 of 15 July 2016 amending and supplementing Act No. 015/2002 of 16 October 2002 on the Labour Code allows women to work at night under the same conditions as men.

31. Since December 2016, campaigns have been carried out to raise awareness of and disseminate the Labour Code and the revised Family Code across the country.

Article 12: Measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care and to provide women with appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation

32. With regard to appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation, article 14 of Act No. 15/013 of 1 August 2015 on means of giving effect to women's rights and gender parity provides that "the State shall guarantee to women, during pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, adequate health-care services at reduced cost, within reasonable distances and, where appropriate, free of charge, as well as earned social and employee benefits."

33. In addition, the implementation of the National Strategy on maternal and child mortality has helped to establish community liaison officers, increase the number of basic health facilities (health centres) throughout the country, equip centres, provide essential medications, promote prenatal consultations and increase access to antiretrovirals. As a result, the maternal mortality rate was reduced to 549 per 100,000 births in 2011, as compared to 1,289 per 100,000 live births in 2001; 88 per cent of women have access to prenatal care provided by trained personnel; and health personnel assisted in 80 per cent of the births that occurred between 2009 and 2014 (Source: Population and Health Survey 2013–2014).

34. In response to the Committee's recommendations in paragraph 32 of its concluding observations, it should be noted that the national reproductive health programme is operational. Within that framework, campaigns to combat vesico-vaginal fistula are being conducted across the country, with the support of the World Health Organization. Dr. Mukwege of Panzi Hospital was awarded the Nobel Prize for these campaigns.

35. The Government has an extensive health and referral hospital construction programme in all provinces, has equipped several hospitals and has increased the number of health zones.

36. Early pregnancy is covered in school curricula, particularly in the life skills course. The reproductive health programme addresses methods of family planning and adolescent health.

37. Abortion is not yet decriminalized, given the sanctity of human life from the moment of conception.

38. The rate of HIV/AIDS has decreased from 4 per cent in 2006 to 2.57 per cent in 2011 and to 1.1 per cent from 2012 to 2015. Among other reasons, this is due to the fact that the national multisectoral programme to combat AIDS is far-reaching, and the number of HIV/AIDS-related services has increased significantly.

Article 13: Measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life, in particular, the right to family benefits, the right to bank loans and the right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life

39. Congolese women continue to have limited access to national economic resources and factors of production. This situation has deteriorated in recent years, especially due to the negative impact of repeated wars and permanent insecurity, particularly in eastern parts of the country. As a result, 61.2 per cent of women live below the poverty line, compared to 38.8 per cent of men. The inferior status of women severely hinders the enjoyment of their rights. In general, women are poorly represented in paid employment and tend to work primarily in the agricultural and informal sectors, often in family businesses. Although they play an important role in the economy, they do not own productive assets, such as land and agricultural inputs, and do not have access to new farming techniques or agricultural credits.

40. With regard to family benefits, there are insufficient resources to provide this service in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

41. Concerning bank loans, article 8 of Act No. 15/013 of 1 August 2015 on means of giving effect to women's rights and gender parity provides that "the State guarantees the right of women to entrepreneurship and promotes access to savings, credit, various opportunities and new technologies, without discrimination on the basis of gender."

42. To ensure the economic empowerment of Congolese women, initiatives are being taken to improve women's access to bank loans. This includes loans granted to women leaders to carry out their economic activities, sometimes provided through microfinancing.

43. There is no discrimination with regard to the right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.

Article 14: Appropriate measures to ensure application of the provisions of the Convention to women in rural areas

44. In response to the recommendations made by the Committee in 2013, in paragraph 34 of its concluding observations, the Democratic Republic of the Congo considers gender-specific needs in all development programmes, including rural development, such as:

- The Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2;

- The governance programme for agriculture, gender and human and institutional capacity-building;
- The 2013 agricultural investment programme;
- The strategy on gender and the empowerment of rural women;
- The national action plan for climate change adaptation — agricultural sector adaptation project: capacity-building in the agricultural sector in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2010–2014);
- The national action plan for climate change adaptation — women and children adaptation project: climate change adaptation;
- The National Environment, Forests, Water and Biodiversity Programme 2, chapter 5.3: Gender and HIV.

45. In addition, article 7 of Act No. 15/013 of 1 August 2015, on means of giving effect to women's rights and gender parity, provides the following: "Economic policies and programmes for national development are created and implemented with consideration for gender parity. They provide equal access to resources and associated benefits. The private sector promotes the participation of women in decision-making bodies." This also relates to the needs of rural women.

46. Additionally, circular note No. 006/CAB/MIN/ECN-DD/05/00/RBM/2016 of 20 July 2016 requires gender to be taken into account in community forestry. In this connection, an annual multi-stakeholder round table is held. Among other subjects, it addresses gender mainstreaming in community forestry.

47. The gender mainstreaming unit, called "Gender and Environment", will be formalized by a ministerial decree.

Part IV

Article 15: Equality of women and men before the law, identical legal capacity, identical rights with regard to the movement of persons and the freedom to choose their residence and domicile

48. The discriminatory legal provisions repealed by the revised Family Code include those related to the legal capacity of married women. This is the case for subitem 2 of article 215, which limited the legal capacity of married women. This article currently reads as follows: "The following are considered incompetent under the law:

(1) Minors;

(2) Adults of unsound mind deprived of capacity;

(3) Adults who are feeble-minded, extravagant, weakened by age or infirm and have been placed under guardianship."

49. Article 448, which did not allow a married woman to conclude a contract without her husband's consent, has been amended to read as follows: "Any legal act requiring the performance of an obligation may be undertaken only with the agreement of both spouses".

50. With regard to the choice of domicile, the following articles of the Family Code have been reformulated to achieve equal rights between spouses:

Article 454: "The spouses undertake to live together wherever they choose to reside, in the interest of the marriage";

> Article 455: "If the place of residence is determined by one of the spouses in a manner that is manifestly unreasonable or contrary to the conditions agreed upon between them, the aggrieved spouse may, after several attempts to arrive at a solution, file for redress with the district court."

51. With regard to the definition of the offence of adultery, article 467 of the 1987 Family Code was amended in 2016 to read as follows: "Adultery shall be punishable by a term of imprisonment of six months to one year and a fine of 60,000 to 250,000 Congolese francs, and shall be deemed to have been committed by:

(1) Any person who knowingly has sexual relations with a married person;

(2) A married person who has sexual relations with a person other than his or her spouse.

The penalty shall be doubled if the adultery was committed in aggravating circumstances, in particular if it took place in the conjugal home."

Article 16: Appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations, the prohibition of the betrothal or marriage of children and the compulsory registration of marriages in an official registry

52. As concerns appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations, and in response to the Committee's recommendation contained in paragraph 38 of the concluding observations, articles 17 and 18 of Act No. 15/013 of 1 August 2015 on means of giving effect to women's rights and gender parity provide as follows:

> Article 17: "Without prejudice to the provisions of the Family Code, men and women have the same rights and obligations in their family and marital relations";
>
> Article 18: "Women's right to marriage and their quality of life in the household shall not be hindered because of the dowry."

53. At the provincial level, Edict No. 29/K.OCC/2015 of 18 May 2015 prohibits customs that denigrate women in the Kasai Occidental province.

54. With regard to the prohibition of the betrothal and marriage of children, the following provisions of the revised Family Code, in line with article 48 of the Child Protection Act of 2009, have been formalized:

> Article 352: "Men and women under the age of 18 years may not enter into marriage";
>
> Article 357: "Children, even if emancipated, may not enter into marriage".

55. This prohibition is coupled with penal sanctions under article 407, which states: "The penalties provided for in the first paragraph of article 395 of this law shall be borne by any registrar who performs or registers the marriage of a man and a woman under the age of 18 years if he or she knew or should have known the situation. The same sanctions also apply to the minor's adult spouse, the persons who consented to the marriage and those who witnessed it."

56. Article 189 of the Child Protection Act provides that: "Any person exercising parental authority or guardianship over a child who contracts marriage, or attempts to do so, or compels said child to marry shall be punished with imprisonment from five to twelve years and with a fine of 800,000 to 1,000,000 Congolese francs."

57. However, given the complexity of the issue, a comprehensive and participatory approach has been favoured over a punitive approach. This has led the Democratic

Republic of the Congo to develop an action plan to end child marriage, which was officially presented by the Minister of Gender, Family and Children's Affairs on 16 June 2017, the Day of the African Child. The plan, the first phase of which runs from 2017 to 2021, consists of 5 pillars, namely:

- Support at-risk children and those already married;
- Improve access to and the quality of social services for these children;
- Raise awareness among children, families, traditional authorities and other opinion leaders on the harmful consequences of child marriage;
- Improve political and legal governance;
- Conduct quantitative and qualitative studies to determine the involvement of children in early marriages and to assess actions that have been taken.

58. Implementation of this plan, which has an estimated annual cost of $2,153,780 (two million one hundred and fifty-three thousand seven hundred and eighty US dollars), requires the support of all development partners in order to achieve the goals.

59. Awareness-raising campaigns are conducted as part of the dissemination of the revised Family Code and in drafting edicts.

Replies to the Committee's concluding observations following its consideration of the combined sixth and seventh periodic report

60. In relation to violence against women in conflict-affected areas, the Committee made 10 recommendations in paragraph 10 of its concluding observations:

(a) Prevent gender-based violence, in particular sexual violence, by State and non-State actors in conflict-affected areas, ensure the protection of civilians, including women, in cooperation with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, conduct gender-sensitive training and adopt codes of conduct for the police and the military and provide training for psychologists and health-care professionals

61. In connection with this recommendation, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has undertaken a number of actions, including:

- Public campaigns to combat violence against women and trafficking in women and girls, launched in Bukavu in 2013 by Mrs. Olive Lembe, wife of the President of the Republic;
- The "Break the Silence" Campaign, launched in 2015 by the Personal Representative of the Head of State on Sexual Violence and Child Recruitment;
- The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign, which is held every year from mid-November to December;
- The establishment of special police units to protect women and children against sexual violence in the 11 former provinces, now 26;
- The establishment of operational zones in conflict-affected provinces, such as in North Kivu and Kasai Central;
- The adoption by the armed forces of an action plan to combat sexual and gender-based violence and a code of ethics and conduct, which includes articles addressing sexual violence;

- The inclusion of training modules on sexual violence and gender equality in the military training programme, as well as in military schools and academies;
- The establishment of an information exchange mechanism and joint campaigns, and the extradition of offenders in the Great Lakes subregion.

(b) Prioritize the fight against impunity for sexual violence in conflict-affected areas, promptly complete effective and independent investigations into violations of women's rights committed by the Congolese armed forces and armed groups and prosecute the perpetrators of such acts, including those who have command responsibility

62. The appointment of the Personal Representative of the Head of State on Sexual Violence indicates that combating this phenomenon is a priority.

63. In addition, cases of sexual violence brought to the attention of the judicial authorities are investigated. Civilian and military perpetrators of rape and other crimes of sexual violence, regardless of their position, are prosecuted and sentenced by civilian and military courts, such as the Operational Military Court established in the eastern part of the country. Mobile courts are organized in the affected areas; 12 commanding officers have been tried and convicted in the eastern part of the country.

(c) Ensure access to justice for all women affected by sexual violence during the conflict, provide proper funding to military jurisdictions, ensure that the justice system is responsive to gender-based violence and increase the number of women judges dealing with cases of sexual violence in conflict-affected areas and the number of judges and prosecutors specialized in sexual violence and pursue efforts, with the support of the international community, towards the adoption of a law on a specialized court or specialized chambers under the national judiciary system to try individuals responsible for war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity

64. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is making efforts to increase the number of women judges in general, as was the case during recruitment in 2010 and 2011, and in the eastern part of the country in particular. Therefore, in the beginning of 2016, the President of the High Judicial Council assigned women judges to public prosecutors' offices and courts in the eastern part of the country, particularly in areas with recurring violence. Court martials, which have the largest sexual violence caseloads, receive financial resources to organize mobile courts so as to reach the most remote areas. In this connection, the State has appealed to international partners, including the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office.

(d) Ensure the protection of victims and witnesses from reprisals whenever they seek access to justice

65. The protection of victims and witnesses is a recent consideration in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that is being discussed within the framework of the national policy document on justice sector reform, adopted in May 2016. In the meantime, Act No. 06/019 of 20 July 2006 amending and supplementing the Decree of 6 August 1959 on the Code of Criminal Procedure provides for that protection by instituting closed-session testimony for victims and witnesses of sexual violence.

(e) Establish a human rights-based vetting system to ensure that no perpetrator of human rights violations, including violations of the human rights of women, is maintained in the army and the police or is integrated into the army, especially during peace negotiations with armed groups

66. A database is being established within the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It will be consulted prior to any appointment or promotion, so as to rule out persons who do not have the required profile, and for other human rights-related purposes.

(f) Ensure that victims have access to comprehensive medical treatment, mental health care and psychosocial support provided by health professionals who are trained to detect sexual violence and treat its consequences and ensure that women victims are provided with medico-legal forms free of cost

67. As concerns synergy in combating sexual violence, medical facilities providing free care for victims are operational in various provinces of the country, particularly in the east. Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, renowned for fistula repair, is a notable example. In Kinshasa, the General Hospital, Saint Joseph Hospital, Ngaliema Hospital, Kintambo Hospital and the Monkole Medical Centre are among the referral facilities for victims of sexual violence.

(g) Ensure the effective implementation of the national action plan for the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and establish a comprehensive national policy to provide adequate reparations to victims of sexual crimes

68. The Government has put in place appropriate structures for the operationalization of this plan. At the strategy and policy level, the local, provincial and national steering committee responsible for the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security is currently governed by Ministerial Order No. 003/CAB/MINGEFAE/LK/2016 of 14 January 2016 amending and supplementing Ministerial Order No. 008/CAB/MIN.GEFAE/GIB/13 of 5 June 2015 on the establishment, organization and operation of the committee. At the operational level, the National Secretariat, which is responsible for monitoring the implementation of National Action Plan 1325, was established by Ministerial Order No. 024/CAB/MIN.GEFAE/BMK/2015 of 4 August 2015 on the establishment, organization and operation of the National Secretariat responsible for the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Currently, 10 of the former provinces, now 26, have a provincial secretariat and contribute to annual country reports. In this regard, civil society organizations have made significant contributions in support of the Government. Furthermore, the revision process for the second-generation action plan is under way.

69. Providing adequate reparations to the victims of sexual crimes remains a challenge for the country. Therefore, the national strategy to combat gender-based violence is being revised to take into account reparations for victims. This will allow the necessary financial resources to be mobilized.

(h) Ensure the effective regulation of the arms trade, control the circulation of illicit small arms and consider ratifying the Arms Trade Treaty (2013)

70. The Congolese Criminal Code penalizes the illegal possession of firearms. Voluntary civilian disarmament campaigns have led to the recovery of large quantities of weapons. This is in addition to forcible disarmament operations carried out against those who resist. The recovered weapons are either destroyed or marked. The

Government has also established a committee responsible for controlling the circulation of small arms, under the supervision of the Ministry of the Interior.

71. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has not yet ratified the Arms Trade Treaty. However, efforts are being made to advocate for a ratification bill in Parliament.

(i) Significantly enhance the inclusion and representation of women in peace negotiations and ensure that women are represented in provincial security committees

72. Formally, the national action plan for the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) aims to significantly increase the representation of women in peace negotiations, among other things.

73. However, representation in provincial security committees is a challenge, because it means that high-level security authorities (such as governors, heads of courts and public prosecutors' offices, police chiefs and heads of the armed forces and security services) would have to be women. This is a major challenge. For this reason, the law on gender equality provides opportunities for women to be represented on these committees.

(j) Ensure the effective implementation of Security Council resolution 2098 (2013)

74. The effective implementation of the resolution is ensured by the national mechanism to monitor and oversee the Addis Ababa Agreement, established by Presidential Order No. 13/020 of 13 May 2013. The corresponding action plan shall be subject to periodic evaluation.

75. The Women's Platform for the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region was established in January 2014 to support the active participation of women at the regional level, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

76. With regard to violence against women, the Committee made six recommendations in paragraph 22 of its concluding observations:

(a) Ensure the effective implementation, including through the provision of sufficient resources, of the 2006 law on sexual violence, the 2009 National Strategy against gender-based violence and the zero-tolerance policy

77. All five pillars of this strategy are effective: the fight against impunity, prevention and protection, multisectoral assistance, security sector reform and data collection and mapping. The Government has put in place structures to monitor the implementation of laws, in accordance with the national strategy to combat gender-based violence and the zero-tolerance policy in line with the Kampala Declaration. This strategy is being revised to take into account new forms of violence.

(b) Prosecute all acts of violence against women upon complaint by the victim or ex officio, adequately punish perpetrators, including when perpetrators are members of the Congolese national police and ensure that judicial decisions are executed, including when such decisions mean that those convicted must serve mandated sentences and that compensation must be paid

78. Under the zero-tolerance policy, the Government does not hesitate to prosecute and punish the perpetrators of violence against women. Some victims have received compensation, such as the women in Songo Mboyo. Nevertheless, providing compensation to victims remains a challenge.

(c) Provide compensation, as well as assistance and rehabilitation, to victims of violence through the setting up of a comprehensive care system for victims of gender-based violence that includes measures to provide such victims with free legal aid, medical and psychological support and access to shelters, counselling and rehabilitation services throughout the territory of the State party

79. The national strategy to combat gender-based violence outlines all provisions relating to the comprehensive care of victims of sexual violence, up to compensation.

(d) Prevent violence against women and children accused of being witches and women in detention and prosecute and punish perpetrators of such violence, including when they are members of the Congolese national police

80. Awareness-raising activities, in particular those targeting religious leaders, help to prevent violence, especially against children accused of being witches. In addition, these issues are covered by special provisions in laws such as the Criminal Code, the Child Protection Code and the police code of conduct. Finally, the legal framework for the prison system, which provides for the separation of male and female inmates, is also a preventive measure.

(e) Ensure that domestic violence, including marital rape, is explicitly prohibited and provide for adequate sanctions

81. The Democratic Republic of the Congo does not have specific legislation criminalizing domestic violence; consequently, the ordinary criminal code is applied.

(f) Undertake awareness-raising and educational activities, targeted at both men and women, as well as the police and other law enforcement officials, health-care and social workers and the judiciary, with the support of civil society organizations, in order to combat violence against women

82. Awareness-raising campaigns are conducted for men and women, government officials, police officers and other relevant actors.

83. With regard to access to justice, the Committee made two recommendations in paragraph 12 of its concluding observations:

(a) Strengthen the judicial system, including by enhancing its financial, technical and human resources, and finalize, without delay, the reform of the judicial system and establish, also without delay, all the jurisdictions that are pending

84. The Government continues to reform the judiciary, based on the national policy document on justice sector reform, adopted in May 2017. The following actions have already been taken:

- Organic Act No. 13/0011-B of 11 April 2013 on the organization, functioning and competence of the courts of law; Organic Act No. 13/010 of 19 February 2013 concerning proceedings before the Court of Cassation; and the law on the organization and functioning of the Constitutional Court were enacted;
- The Supreme Court was divided into three new courts, namely the Council of State, the Court of Cassation and the Constitutional Court, and family courts and labour courts were established;
- Court buildings and public prosecutors' offices in Kinshasa and in the provinces were renovated or constructed. With the support of partners, including the European Union, the Government built a facility to house the High Courts (the Constitutional Court, the Court of Cassation and the Council of State). Twelve family courts and 11 commercial courts were also established;

- Since 2011, the salaries of all civilian and military judges have been increased (by an average of 20 per cent) in order to strengthen the independence of the judiciary;
- In 2016, the Government continued to establish specialized courts, including commercial courts, labour courts and family courts, with a view to strengthening the capacity of law enforcement agencies and judicial bodies;
- A prosecution support unit on the prevention and suppression of sexual violence against women and children was established within the military justice system to better combat impunity for perpetrators of sexual violence.

(b) Ensure that women, including women victims of violence suffered during the conflict, have effective access to courts and tribunals and, in particular

Provide free legal aid to women without sufficient means

85. The Congolese Government, in partnership with the bar association and human rights non-governmental organizations, provides free legal assistance to victims, including with the financial support of UNFPA and the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office.

Strengthen anti-corruption mechanisms in order to enhance women's confidence in the judiciary

86. Anti-corruption mechanisms have been strengthened through, inter alia, the operationalization of disciplinary chambers for judges and the appointment by the President of the Republic of a Special Adviser to combat corruption, money-laundering and the financing of terrorism, within the framework of the national anti-corruption strategy. There is also an anti-corruption unit within the Ministry of Justice.

Raise awareness among women about the legal provisions on sexual violence and encourage them to file complaints rather than to opt for mediation

87. Campaigns to raise awareness of the laws relating to sexual violence focus on reporting obligations, with particular emphasis on the prohibition of amicable settlements between the parties.

Conduct awareness-raising campaigns to eliminate stigmatization of women victims of sexual violence

88. The Government, in collaboration with non-governmental organizations, continues to organize awareness-raising campaigns and training sessions, with a view to eliminating this stigmatization.

Provide systematic training to judges, prosecutors and lawyers on the application of legislation prohibiting discrimination and sexual violence

89. Training on the legislation prohibiting discrimination and sexual violence is provided, and special units to combat sexual violence have also been established by the Attorney General of the Republic in public prosecutors' offices for this purpose.

Support non-governmental organizations facilitating women's access to justice

90. The Government provides support to approximately 30 recognized non-governmental organizations under the budget of the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children's Affairs.

91. In connection with the national machinery for the advancement of women, the Committee made four recommendations in paragraphs 16 and 18 of its concluding observations.

(a) Prioritize the allocation of State funds to the realization of women's rights, including to the elimination of violence against women and impunity in conflict-affected areas

92. With the support of its partners, the Government is working to provide resources to the mechanisms that promote the enjoyment of women's rights. The Ministry of Gender, Family and Children's Affairs seeks to mobilize these resources through the National Fund for the Advancement of Women and the Protection of Children.

93. The Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan, which has replaced the Amani Programme since 2009, seeks to stabilize and rehabilitate conflict-affected regions. The Plan has three components: security, humanitarian assistance and the economy. The aim of the security component is to remedy the lack of security by deploying the Police and the Army, thereby regaining sovereignty through the restoration of State authority.

94. As part of the effective implementation of the Plan, in the territories freed from the grip of armed groups in the eastern part of the country the Democratic Republic of the Congo has established and installed a civil administration and special police units for the protection of women and children.

(b) Significantly increase the financial, technical and human resources of the national machinery for the advancement of women at the national and local levels

95. The Government strives to provide financial resources to equip structures and strengthen the capacity of those working within the machinery.

(c) Accelerate the implementation of the National Policy on Gender Issues

96. The State has established various institutional mechanisms and strategies. These include the thematic group on gender, focal points, a gender audit, a database of gender-related statistical indicators, the construction and renovation of women's centres and gender-sensitive budgeting.

97. With regard to temporary special measures.

(a) Raise awareness among members of parliament, government officials, employers and the general public about the need to adopt temporary special measures in order to achieve women's substantive equality with men

98. Awareness-training is organized on a regular basis in various institutions in the country and for the general public. In addition, advocacy sessions with members of parliament have resulted in the adoption and enactment of Act No. 15/013 of 1 August 2015 on means of giving effect to women's rights and gender parity and Act No. 016/008 of 15 July 2016 amending and supplementing Act No. 87-010 of 1 August 1987 on the Family Code.

99. In connection with the protection of women and girls from exploitative labour.

(a) Protect girls working in the mining sector

100. Ministerial Order No. 12/MIN/TPS/AR/34/2006 of 10 June 2006 on the establishment and operation of the national committee to combat the worst forms of child labour takes into account the protection of girls. Provincial Edict

No. 27/K.OCC/2015 of 18 May 2015, issued by the Governor of Kasai Central, prohibiting the recruitment and exploitation of children in mining zones is also implemented.

(b) Pay particular attention to the conditions of women working in the informal sector with a view to ensuring that they have access to social services

101. The national health policy encourages mutual health plans for women working in the informal sector and undertakes to renovate social hospitals and monitor the pricing of services by category.

(c) Broaden the definition of sexual harassment to include conduct that creates a hostile working environment and adopt legislation providing additional avenues for redress to victims of sexual harassment

102. These issues are resolved by the 2016 Labour Code and the code of conduct for public officials.

(d) Reduce the gender wage gap, including by addressing the occupational segregation of women

103. The revised Labour Code has standardized family benefits and enshrined the principle of equal pay for work of equal value.

(e) Ensure that protective measures for women are strictly limited to maternity protection and not based on stereotypical perceptions of their abilities and their role in society

104. The law on gender equality prohibits making decisions based on stereotypes.

(f) Expand women's access to microfinance and microcredit at low interest rates so as to enable them to engage in income-generating activities and start their own businesses

105. In order to create wealth to grow its economy, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has established a Ministry of small and medium-sized enterprises. These enterprises are largely run by the middle class, which tends to evolve in the informal sector. To increase profitability, article 27 of the charter of small and medium-sized enterprises and artisans, established on 24 August 2009, calls for the State to promote entrepreneurship for women, youth and persons with disabilities.

106. With regard to women's entrepreneurship, a bill is under discussion in parliament.

107. With regard to disadvantaged groups of women:

(a) Ensure that Pygmy women have access, without discrimination, to basic services, including health care and education, and to land, ensure that they have access to self-sufficient livelihoods in the forest and provide compensation when they have been displaced from the forest

108. The Government's efforts are aimed at reaching all parts of the hinterland and providing special protection to Pygmies in the forests in which they live. These people are given consideration in the Forestry Code of 29 April 2002 on innovations that guarantee the rights of local and indigenous communities to the resources on which they depend.

109. The Government has taken into account indigenous peoples in the strategic and financial plan (2012–2016) of the National Fund for Advancement and Social

Services through the literacy project and in building the basic socioeconomic infrastructure.

(b) Provide protection and assistance to other women who face multiple forms of discrimination, including internally displaced women, refugee women, women albinos, girls living in the street, elderly women and women with disabilities and ensure that these women have access, without discrimination, to health care, education, clean water, sanitation and income-generating activities

110. With regard to displaced and refugee women, the Government follows the recommendations in the Protocol of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, on the prevention and suppression of sexual violence against women and children, adopted on 30 November 2006, of which the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a signatory. Government actions to support this group are undertaken by the Ministry of Solidarity and Humanitarian Action. Addressing this issue remains a challenge.

111. Women with albinism, girls living in the street, elderly women and women with disabilities are afforded the same protections by the Constitution as members of all other social categories. As concerns the protection of elderly women and women with disabilities, the first paragraph of article 49 of the Constitution provides that older persons and persons with disabilities have the right to special measures of protection according to their physical, intellectual and moral needs. Act No. 11/008 of 9 July 2011 criminalizing torture punishes the offences referred to in article 48 bis when, inter alia, the victim is a pregnant woman, a minor, an elderly person or person with a disability. Within the National Human Rights Commission there is a permanent subcommission for the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups, including persons living with HIV and elderly persons.

112. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol. There are also related structures in place within the Ministry of Social Affairs: the Department for the Coordination of Rehabilitation Activities for Persons with Disabilities, the national vocational training centre for persons with disabilities and the National Institute for the Blind, all of which work closely with relevant civil society organizations.

(c) Ratify the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), the Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness

113. With regard to the ratification of the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention), the Democratic Republic of the Congo has already ratified the Convention under Act No. 14/025 of 8 July 2014 and intends to deposit the instrument of ratification in the near future. Given the importance of the issues concerning the status of stateless persons and statelessness, the Democratic Republic of the Congo intends to ratify the relevant conventions.

114. With regard to data collection:

(a) Develop a system to improve the collection of data disaggregated by sex and other relevant factors necessary to assess the impact and effectiveness of policies and programmes aimed at combatting sexism,

(b) Enhance women's enjoyment of their human rights,

(c) Seek technical assistance from relevant United Nations agencies and enhance its collaboration with women's associations that could assist in collecting accurate data.

115. With its partners, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has established a gender statistics database through the Institutional Support Project on Statistics and Public Finances, under the Ministry of Gender, Family and Children's Affairs. The data is then published in a thematic bulletin on gender. The first and second issues, "education and training" and "the labour market" respectively, have already been published (website: www.data.snvsbg.org:888, Ministry of Gender).

116. Furthermore, as concerns the collection of data on gender-based violence, the Office of the Personal Representative of the Head of State on Sexual Violence and Child Recruitment has provided the following statistics from civil and military jurisdictions:

Statistics on civilian and military rape cases from 2014–2015 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Provinces	*Jurisdictions*	*Cases received*			*Cases received*			*Cases received*			*Cases received*		
		2014	*2015*	*Total*	*2014*	*2015*	*Total*	*2014*	*2015*	*Total*	*2014*	*2015*	*Total*
Maniema	Civilian	133	78	211	97	70	167	17	4	21	18	5	23
	Military	13	10	23	2	3	5	6	7	13	3	0	3
Total		**146**	**88**	**234**	**99**	**73**	**172**	**23**	**11**	**34**	**21**	**5**	**26**
South Kivu	Civilian	86	118	204	56	112	168	20	4	24	16	2	18
	Military	31	15	46	20	6	26	5	7	12	6	0	6
Total		**117**	**133**	**250**	**76**	**118**	**194**	**25**	**11**	**36**	**22**	**2**	**24**
North Kivu	Civilian	239	177	416	30	72	102	209	105	314	0	0	0
	Military	90	28	118	3	12	15	68	22	90	9	4	13
Total		**329**	**205**	**534**	**33**	**84**	**117**	**277**	**127**	**404**	**9**	**4**	**13**
Katanga	Civilian	312	205	517	119	41	160	191	62	253	93	11	104
	Military	27	4	31	21	4	25	6	0	6	0	0	0
Total		**339**	**209**	**548**	**140**	**45**	**185**	**197**	**62**	**259**	**93**	**11**	**104**
Kasai Occidental	Civilian	103	76	179	47	69	116	23	4	27	33	3	36
	Military	3	8	11	0	3	3	2	2	4	1	3	4
Total		**106**	**84**	**190**	**47**	**72**	**119**	**25**	**6**	**31**	**34**	**6**	**40**
Kasai Oriental	Civilian	136	136	275	36	69	105	80	44	124	23	23	46
	Military	9	8	17	1	4	5	7	1	8	0	1	1
Total		**148**	**144**	**292**	**37**	**73**	**110**	**87**	**45**	**132**	**23**	**24**	**47**
Bas-Congo	Civilian	419	338	757	112	160	272	256	144	400	51	33	84
	Military	31	17	48	2	4	6	23	9	32	3	3	6
Total		**450**	**355**	**805**	**114**	**164**	**278**	**279**	**153**	**432**	**54**	**36**	**90**
Bandundu	Civilian	119	102	221	57	77	134	73	40	113	20	17	37
	Military	6	7	13	1	1	2	2	3	5	3	3	6
Total		**125**	**109**	**234**	**58**	**78**	**136**	**75**	**43**	**118**	**23**	**20**	**43**

Provinces	Jurisdictions	Cases received			Cases received			Cases received			Cases received		
		2014	2015	Total	2014	2015	Total	2014	2015	Total	2014	2015	Total
Kinshasa	Civilian	932	747	1 679	279	435	714	425	201	626	224	102	326
	Military	56	57	113	20	48	68	18	3	21	18	7	25
Total		**988**	**804**	**1 792**	**299**	**483**	**782**	**443**	**204**	**647**	**242**	**109**	**351**
Orientale	Civilian	207	177	384	64	112	176	76	46	122	63	16	79
	Military	18	22	40	0	1	1	13	14	27	5	7	12
Total		**225**	**199**	**424**	**64**	**113**	**177**	**89**	**60**	**149**	**68**	**23**	**91**
Équateur	Civilian	76	65	141	19	10	29	14	5	19	7	10	17
	Military	12	19	31	32	8	11	5	6	11	4	9	13
Total		**88**	**84**	**172**	**22**	**18**	**40**	**19**	**11**	**30**	**11**	**19**	**30**
Grand total		**3 061**	**2 414**	**5 475**	**989**	**1 321**	**2 310**	**1 539**	**733**	**2 272**	**600**	**259**	**859**

Source: Office of the Personal Representative of the Head of State on Sexual Violence and Child Recruitment.[1]

[1] Judicial monitoring mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2014–2015.

117. With regard to the Optional Protocol and amendment to article 20 of the Convention:

Ratify, without delay, the Optional Protocol to the Convention, noting that the State party had committed itself to ratifying it during the universal periodic review of 2010. The Committee also encourages the State party to accept, without delay, the amendment to article 20 (1) of the Convention concerning the meeting time of the Committee.

118. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is in the process of ratification.

119. As concerns the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action:

Use the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in its efforts to implement the provisions of the Convention.

120. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is harmonizing its programmes with the Beijing Declaration, as recommended by the Committee in paragraph 42 of its concluding observations. It is also drafting the sectoral plan under the national action plan, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action served as the basis for the National Women's Council, established under Ministerial Order No. CAB/V.M/AFF.SO.F./015/98 of 10 July 1998.

121. As concerns the Millennium Development Goals and the post-2015 development framework (Sustainable Development Goals).

Integrate a gender perspective, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention, into all efforts aimed at the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and in relation to the post-2015 development framework.

122. This is reflected in national policies and programmes with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in general, and Goal 5 in particular, including the Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2 (2012–2015), the Government Action Plan (2012–2016), the 2010 National Gender Policy and the strategy to mainstream gender in policies and programmes.

123. With regard to dissemination and implementation:

(a) Implement the present concluding observations and recommendations between now and the submission of the next periodic report. The Committee therefore requests that the concluding observations be disseminated in a timely manner, in the official languages of the State party, to the relevant State institutions at all levels (regional, national and local), in particular to the Government, the ministries, the parliament and the judiciary, to enable the full implementation of the observations.

(b) Collaborate with all stakeholders concerned, such as employers' associations, trade unions, human rights and women's organizations, universities and research institutions and media entities.

(c) Disseminate concluding observations in an appropriate form at the local community level, to enable their implementation.

(d) Continue to disseminate the Convention, its Optional Protocol and relevant jurisprudence and the Committee's general recommendations to all stakeholders.

124. The Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo recognizes that this recommendation has not been consistently implemented. Nevertheless, it should be noted that civil society organizations and financial and technical partners (United Nations Children's Fund, UNFPA, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the

Empowerment of Women) have carried out advocacy activities aimed at senators and deputies, which resulted in the adoption and promulgation of Act No. 15/013 of 1 August 2015 on means of giving effect to women's rights and gender parity and Act No. 16/008 of 15 July 2016 amending and supplementing the Family Code.

125. In connection with the ratification of other treaties:

Consider ratifying the treaties to which it is not yet a party, i.e. the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance.

126. The Democratic Republic of the Congo ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol on 30 September 2015.